

Shorts.

Most of which were written by S.

Shorts.

To read this book is to be allowed into my mind, into my thoughts and imaginations, into my heart. To read this is to catch a glimpse of my existence; these pieces, I consider my children.

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¹ colored text indicates pieces that were not written by S.

unattain

*you could liken this experience to watching a suit from behind a show glass,
a suit so majestic,
a suit you had made an attempt to wear once before,
and on putting a sleeve in...
it dawns on you—it's not your size,
it wasn't meant for you.
desire led you to try it on a second time,
The outcome isn't different.
you had already planned out the many places you'd wear it to,
and funnily, there's a lot of other suits on display,
but the one suit you so desire more than any other,
Is the one suit you can't have.*

Shorts.

forecast

*The evening wears an unusual look.
it's somewhere between a sunset and a cloudy sky,
it's confused, it's indecisive.
Still, it blows that breeze with confidence as if certain of its arrangement with the rain.
but I, human, can only presume.
I have not the slightest knowledge of their divine arrangement.*



after credits

“Sir...”

“...”

“Sir!”

“*Oh, yeah, hey..., what's up?*”

“Sir, we’re closing the theater now. The movie’s ended.”

“*Come on, there's no way that's the end...*”

“...”

“*...Right?*”

“I’m afraid it is, sir”

“*Wait, maybe if I sat here a while longer, it'll keep playing...a new scene might show up.*”

“I’m afraid it doesn’t work like that”

“it’s over, it’s a wrap”

“And I’m sure you know that...”

“*but I mean...an after credit scene? a sequel? something!*”

“*I didn't want it to end already*”

“But that’s the best part, really”

“Nobody wants a forever running movie.”

“*True, I know I wouldn't want that*”

“So don’t worry about it. Go, watch a new movie”

“*Will it be as good though?*”

“You can’t even imagine it”

“*I'll be leaving now then, I'll show up when I'm ready*”

“We’re always open when you’re ready”

“*You'll be seeing me soon, Later*”

“And I’ll be here. Later”

Shorts.

50ft high

The wind continued to calmly hit my face as I stood there, watching from the window of what might've been the highest building around. Ambient music played in my headphones as I watched the people below go about their business. I wanted to know what every single person I watched thought. I wanted to know their destinations as they walked in the sun.

I felt elevated, like I was some kind of higher being who could answer their prayers.

S

Shorts.

Dawn Rain

*Hey there,
when it starts to rain, my mind starts to wander,
Imagining how those raindrops would feel, I
can't help but ponder.
But truth be told, I know my limits, I won't
pretend,
Because sometimes the rain brings more hurt
than I can mend.*

*I see others dancing in the rain, having a blast,
And I admit, I wish I could join in, be part of the
cast.
But the pain that comes with it, I don't want to
endure,
So for now, I'll keep longing, hoping for a future.
Maybe next time, when the rain pours down
from above,
I'll gather the courage to dance, embrace that
feeling of love.
But until then, I'll wait patiently, my dear friend,
Knowing that one day, my dance in the rain will
transcend.*

*Hang in there, keep dreaming, and don't lose
sight,
You'll get your chance to dance, bask in the
rain's delight.
And remember, I'm here cheering you on, every
step of the way,
Sending you love and positivity, come what may.*

Dawn Rain (Alternate)

*Whenever it rains I can't help but imagine how
the rain would feel on my skin for five minutes.
I can't stay in the rain for that long, I wish I
could spin it.
Cause I know my limit.*

*It's something I see people doing and would
want to be a part of, I admit
But the pain that comes with it isn't something I
would want to commit
This bitter-sweet relationship I have with the
rain is one where it means not to harm me...
...but it does.*

*The rain wouldn't know how I feel when I feel
it's harsh drops on my skin
or it's cold air from my nose down to my toes.
To the rain it's giving me soft droplets of
completeness, a wholesome feeling.
But the rain also brings a sense of sadness and
pain.
I want to experience it.*

*Dance in the rain maybe?
Maybe next time.*

F

D

Shorts.

Could've

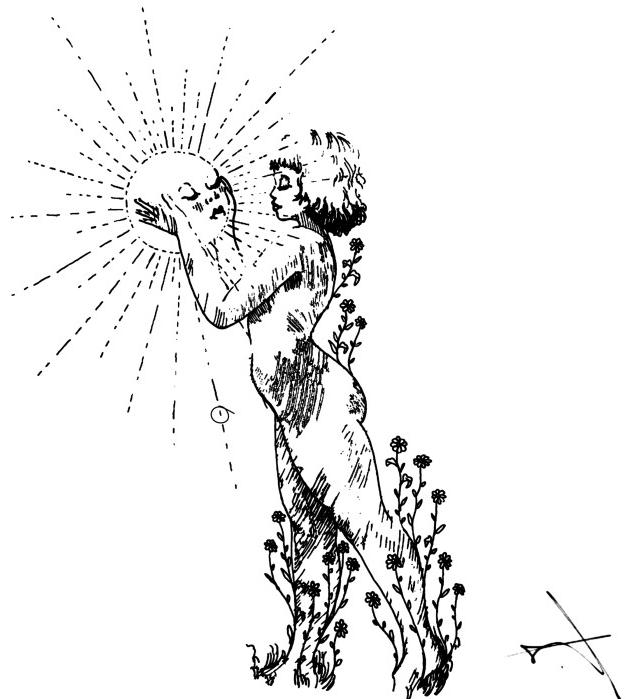
*could've been together like Bonnie and Clyde,
Our true selves we'd never need to hide,
You could've been here, right by my side,
could've been here if you hadn't lied.*

*could've gone a stroll, it's perfect weather,
could've gotten cold, could've worn my sweater,
maybe gotten wet, wet together,
could've been perfect or even better.*

Shorts.

Orb

*I wonder,
why he wander
seeking the angelic orb of Waan Dhar
and the reasons why he'd want her;
she brought power to whoever won her
and unique, there was only one her.
obsessed. like a robe his mind had worn her.
“you are being sought!”, The forces warned her
so she hid herself, until the forces spawned her.*

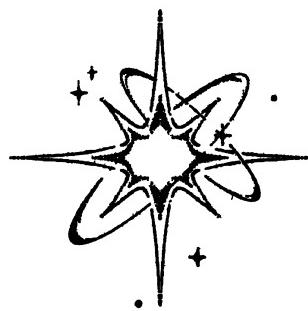


Explosions in the sky

*I sit in my room listening to the explosions in the sky.
The fireworks, the sound of the season,
letting a loud bang as their sparks fly.
Serving a satisfying watch, you could feel some tension releasing.*

*The variation in their colors keep you interested,
the barrage of launches hold your attention,
the sounds captivate rather than scare you,
the experience leaving you in awe,
the display, reminding of the celebration.*

*Each existence carefully playing their part;
putting a perfect show, the launchers give their dedication and heart,
giving their audience, each display has the onlookers swaying,
And the rockets, serving their purpose, explosively obeying.*



Shorts.

adore.

I adore you,
adore your very existence,
adore the womb that carried you,
the hands that held you.

I adore your eyes,
adore those dark circles.

I adore your thighs,
adore your light freckles.

I adore your soul,
though I haven't touched it yet.

I adore your mind,
though strikingly opposite from mine.

I adore your body,
though always hidden by clothing.

I adore your presence,
adore the aura that covers you.

I adore your very existence,
I adore you.

S

Shorts.

unadore.

And when that day comes, you would look at her and wonder, “Is this the person I once adored?”
You will question what you once held as beauty standards, you begin to question your taste.

No eye is clearer than that of a man who has fallen out of love.
Love is not blind. It is a deliberate ignorance, it is an intentional negligence.

Was it not you who swore that there was none like her?
Now here you are, fallen for another who isn’t any different.

You know of this inevitability,
You know that day would come.

The day when you would unadore her.

S

Shorts.

Twin flames

There was a feeling of inevitability when I met you. The sense that we would be together; that there would be a moment when you would look at me in a certain way, and we would cross the threshold from friendship into something so much more.

We spoke once about lovers who kept finding each other, no matter how many times the world came between them. And I think I had to break your heart, and you had to break mine.
How else could we know the worth of what we were given?

I think you were always meant to know me a little better than anyone else. And our lives were fated to converge like some cosmic dance. I know there is a terrible distance between us.
But our bodies are made of celestial light, and we are hurtling through space and time, toward the most beautiful collision.

L

Shorts.

rain, music and you.

*Rain, Music and You,
A gathering of not more than two,
Think of the craziness, the things we'd do.
Reggae, Rock, Rhythm and Blue,
I'd listen to whatever as long as you want to.
You need excitement and I'm here to rescue,
I'm not your boyfriend, I'm not your boo,
But I wouldn't mind rain, music and you.*

S

Café Encounter

As he sat in despair upon the realization that he had been stood up by his date, he noticed her in a dimly lit corner of the cafe. Even in the poor lighting, he could clearly see how beautiful she was. She sat quietly, gracefully reading a book, a book he had recognized to be Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War'. He had read the book a year ago, he felt it was the perfect conversation starter. He wondered if it was a good idea, if it was perfect timing. As he thought, his body instinctively moved, slowly walking towards her direction.

"*The Art of the War, yeah? That's a classic*" He started, having a light welcoming smile.

"*Sure is.*" She answered without shifting her eyes from the pages of the book.

His morale dropped but decided to give it one last shot.

"*So, who is it that you're battling against?*" He asked with a light chuckle.

She set a bookmark on the page she was reading and placed the book on the table before answering, "*Myself, actually. It's been chaos and war in my head lately.*"

She took a moment to look at him after she spoke. He was attractive and well dressed. She too had become interested.

He paused for a moment, he had no idea how to reply to what she had just said.

Giving up, he answered, still smiling, "*Alright. Enjoy your read. I hope you win.*"

As he turned to leave, she called out, "*I could use a tag team though!*"

He smiled before turning around and answering, "*An alliance it is then*"

Taking the seat right opposite her, they talked about the book and their 'mental warfare' until they had completely exhausted the topic. She had a beautiful voice, spoke well and was an intellectual— she thought the exact same about him. They both wanted the conversations to go past the subject of the book, they wanted to know each other more.

"*So what are you doing here?*" He started.

"*What else? Food, Drink and Reading*" She answered with forced laughter.

He wasn't convinced, so he queried, "*On a Friday night? Please!*", following with genuine laughter.

"*Come on, no one looks this good just for food, drink and reading. It's okay if you're here on a date, it really is*" He added with a smirk.

"*A perceptive one, yeah? Okay?*" She answered, embarrassed but impressed.

"*I did come for a date but got stood up*" She shyly added, looking away from him.

"*That makes two of us...*" He said after a short pause.

Her face lit up. "*Get out of here! You're joking!*" She answered, laughing while smacking him with a napkin.

"*No, seriously!*" He defended, smiling.

At that moment, they were both happy to have been stood up by their dates. Any different and they wouldn't have had that conversation—or connection.

"Let's get drinks then!" She said as she gestured to the waiter to come attend to them.

"Can't let these outfits go to waste, right?" She asked, returning the stare he had been giving for about two minutes.

"Absolutely," He answered with a light smile.

As they got drinks, they had conversations about several topics without a break or pause. The energy between them was unmatched, it was otherworldly and their connection, cosmic. He didn't believe much about fate and predestination but at that moment, there was clearly only one explanation—and it definitely wasn't coincidence.

After they had not more than two drinks, he leaned in and said, *"Hey, let's get out of here"*.

"Where do you have in mind?" She answered, excited and with a curious look.

"There's an art gallery I've been meaning to visit in a while" He answered. They had already talked about their shared interest in art in one of their conversations.

"I don't see why not!" She replied in ecstatic agreement.

He immediately signaled the waiter and made payment for their drinks before confidently taking her hand and hurrying out the exit.

On getting out the door, there was a car parked out front. She had subtly ordered a ride as he paid for the bill.

"Way ahead of you. That's our cab" She said as though she just read his mind.

He was speechless. All he did was smile as he grabbed the door handle, opening it and gesturing at her to go in before him. He knew exactly how to treat a lady even if he barely had experience with them.

As they sat in the car, they were silent. He stared at her in honest admiration while she looked out the window admiring the city lights. She knew he had his gaze fixed on her but was too shy to return it. Understanding this, he reached out and took her hand. Her hand was warm, it shivered but didn't resist his touch. They maintained this position during the entire ride.

On arrival, he alighted and then helped her out. They initially weren't impressed by the gallery's exterior; they must've expected it to be fancier. However, on getting in, they were overwhelmed by the beauty of both the building and the exhibited artworks. She could not hold her excitement, she instantly became talkative and he was more than happy to listen. They had the whole place to themselves as they weren't any other visitors. She made sure to see and spend time with every artwork present in the gallery even teasing that one of the sculptures looked like him. He was just as excited as she was but hers was a lot more evident.

As they toured the place, they stumbled in a large room that held only one painting. It was a large painting that looked Parisian—It was beautiful. You could immediately tell why it had an entire room to itself. The painting depicted a knight's wedding, illustrating how he kissed his bride

before an audience. She was mesmerized. It had instantly become her favorite piece in the gallery.

“*Hey, come take a photo with me.*” She whispered in an unintentionally seductive tone. She called the attention of a curator and asked for his help in taking a photo of both of them with the painting in the background. As they posed for the photo, she leaned closer making him comfortable enough to put his arm around her waist as he had wanted. After the photo session, they reluctantly called it a night, leaving the gallery. As they walked away from the building, strolling into the night, they had conversations, pausing at intervals to stare at each other. She had become confident enough to return and hold a stare. They had become deeply interested and attracted to each other but said nothing of it; both expecting the other to read the signs.

They had walked a distance before deciding to call cabs to take them to their respective homes. The cabs were in view when he asked, “*So, was tonight fun enough for me to get your number?*” She smiled uncontrollably. The whole time she was itching, wondering if he’d ever ask.

“*Yes. Yes, it was*” She answered.

As they exchanged phone numbers, he insisted that they exchanged emails as well. It was unusual for her to be asked for her email as she only used it for formal communication.

Her cab had pulled up. Again, he got the door for her and as she was about to enter the car, she asked, “*What’s your name?*”. Funnily, they had gone the whole night without exchanging names; though they had gotten an idea of what it might be as they exchanged emails.

He gave his name and she gave hers.

She smiled and repeated his name before entering into the cab.

As her cab drove off, he too, in a low tone repeated her name.

A day had passed and she had not gotten a call or text from him. She had become uneasy, wondering if she should reach out first. He, on the other hand, had been wondering if he’d be coming off as pushy if he reached out immediately and thought to give it a day. It seemed like a whole week. He too was itching to make contact.

As she sat idle, waiting, she got a notification on her laptop—it was an email, and from him.

The subject read: *Sorry I’m late. I was at war.*

Shorts.

Valkyrie

Herald, Herald!
An Angel named Gerald,
Arriving intact on winged horseback,
And you'd know for a fact that the war has been won
when he receives his orders to attack.



11:59

"How was your day?"

"Don't you mean 'how IS my day?'"

"Oh no, that's hardly what I meant", she answered, raising an eyebrow.

"Well, how are you?"

"I'm good, really. Long day but came out smiling. Why?"

"Perfect, there you have it"

"Okay, it's official, I'm lost"

"That's how my day is...", Having a wide grin.

"Wha-"

"You are in fact, my day. Your absence would mean night, darkness"

"You silly...", Hitting his shoulder as hard as she could while smiling uncontrollably.

"Keep making me smile so hard and I just might become the Joker"

"Aren't you already? With how much you make me laugh and the amount of makeup you had on your birthday", Setting up his guard for the incoming hit.

"I'll fucking kill you!" Launching attacks as he'd expected.

"Wait in line", Having a proud look.

"But yeah, how was my day? I'm not sure but I know it's a lot better right now.

Yours?"



Shorts.

Are you lonely because you're an artist?

Or did you become an artist because you're lonely?

Ethereal, Otherworldly

I recall my encounter with a cosmic being. On that Wednesday morning, I had started my day with the usual routine that consisted of a 5am run across the city and back. Though on this particular morning I was very reluctant to fulfill this part of the routine; my bed felt extra comfortable and the weather wasn't helping either. After about 15 minutes of conflict, I gathered the resolve to eventually get out of bed and after completing my ritual of meditation and prayer, I headed out for the run. The weather was perfect and the city was still asleep. It felt like a better experience than sleeping in.

As I bolted across the city, my favorite spot was coming into view; it was a bridge that stood opposite a greater part of the city, providing a beautiful view of the city's large buildings along with the reflection of the city lights on the lake below. As I ran closer, I noticed a figure calmly sitting on the parapet of the bridge, watching the city. Curiously, I ran even closer and the closer I got, the more human it looked; and getting to a distance where I could clearly see the figure, I was consumed by fear as I could not comprehend what my eyes looked at. I immediately made an attempt to run as fast as possible in the opposite direction but my body wouldn't move. The being emitted an aura that I could feel compelling me to kneel and while I struggled to fight its compulsion, its position remained unchanged; gazing at the city view as though I was not there.

Eventually giving in, I fell on my knees and despite not looking in my direction, it could tell. It stood up and walked over to me, leaving me five times more dumbfounded and afraid than before. Standing before me was a vertically imposing being, no less than 8 feet tall, having the physique of a lean muscular human male. Its skin was golden, shone just as bright and was adorned in a fine white linen having light blue inscriptions and designs at the edge of the fabric. He had a head and of course, a face. However, he had no facial features whatsoever—not eyes, not a nose, not a mouth. Instead his golden face was covered in what looked like several tiny stars. He looked ethereal, otherworldly.

Attempting to match my height, he too knelt but on a single knee, making sounds that I could not understand. My mind shared a state of confusion and fear which visibly showed in my facial expression.

“Ah yea, I did forget that we do not share the same tongue.” He spoke, despite not having a mouth.

“Pardon the urging of mine spiritual aura. 'Tis involuntary for those of inferior spiritual essence. Here, grasp mine hand.” He added in a calm welcoming tone as he held out his hand.

I was still frightened and speechless, unsure whether or not to give my hand.

Observing my hesitation and sensing my fear, he followed, *“Thou need not fear me. I bear thee no ill intent.”*

As I reluctantly took his hand I had an odd feeling; the force that pushed and kept me on my knees had turned into a zephyr, fear and tension instantly left my body and the burnout from my run had disappeared. I felt energy coursing through my body. I felt stronger, smarter, better and confident.

“Wow. What did you do to me?” I asked in amazement as I stood.

“I augmented thy spiritual essence to a degree where thou wouldest be impervious to mine urging” He answered, having a light smile. I was able to tell his expressions, despite him being still faceless.

Shorts.

“Okay...that...you...this...is fucking wild!” I exclaimed, still in awe.

“So, who... what exactly are you?”

“So, who... what exactly are you?”

It spoke along with me in perfect harmony and sync.

“Verily, I canst decipher thy thoughts. Twould be strange indeed if I, akin to thee mortals, couldst not accomplish such a feat at the least.” It cut in as I attempted to speak. My words went back down my throat, I wondered what it was he couldn’t do—and he probably knew I wondered that.

“I, having full knowledge of thy being, find it equitable to disclose a fraction of mine own nature unto thee.” He followed.

“Yeah, but one thing.... Look man, can you speak modern English? Can’t properly understand you when you’re sounding all Shakespearean and shit”

He smiled—or at least I knew he did. It was all still so strange to me.

“Well, My name is Eukōlak. I belong to a race of a few like me. And despite being one of the three leaders, I travel a lot. With your sphere particularly being my favorite”

He followed his introduction with a mental projection of where he came from and what it meant to live there. And though being just a glimpse, the experience was surreal.

We sat together, watching as the city slowly woke while having conversations. He had a very calm, welcoming personality, you could liken his behavior to that of a Buddhist monk. He told stories of events from his planet and his travels to other ‘spheres’ as he called them. He mentioned that he had never had a close interaction with a human despite his many travels to earth. He believed that humans are a race better observed from a distance as they are not mentally prepared to accept the reality of the existence of beings such as him. We covered topics I felt I was not supposed to have knowledge of but he didn’t seem to mind.

“Is there anything you can’t do?” I asked in admiration.

“The more things I tell you I can’t do, the more human I become to you”

“I guess that’s one way to look at it...”

An hour had passed, leaving me with 60 minutes to be at work—he already knew that. Before I could even speak, we were at my apartment.

“Absolute light. It’s one of the many things we can do.” He added, knowing I was just about to ask what had happened.

“Damn! Do I get one of those?”

“I already gave you the greatest power imaginable. Knowledge.”

Frustrated, I let out a loud sigh.

“So, what can I get you? Scotch?” I teased with a mischievous grin.

“If only you mortals knew what true wine is” He arrogantly clapped back.

“Maybe we don’t, but we sure know how to make a fucking good latte” I defended, as I stirred my cup of coffee. We both burst into light laughter.

He walked around, observing the items in the house as I hurriedly prepared for work. He could barely fit in the house, he was too large for my tiny apartment. Touring the place, he knocked over every item he came across but telekinetically put them back in place. He seemed fascinated by some of the items I had

Shorts.

lying around, particularly my action figure collection, holding the tiny figures with delicacy in his large hands. And by the time I was ready for work, the sun had already shown its face.

As I adjusted my tie, I asked, “*Don’t you guys do something, go to work, stuff like that?*”

“*We do not. Work is for those who are not content and for those who do not share*” He answered.

“*Damn, man, that was deep!*” I replied with a mouthful of sandwich.

I looked at my wrist and realized that I was inevitably late; it was rush hour and it would be impossible to make it through the traffic in time. But then I remembered. I looked at him and smiled.

“*Think you could absolute light me to work?*” I asked with a wide grin.

“*Thought you’d never ask*” He answered.

As held out his hand to teleport me, I thought to myself, “*There’s no way this guy’s just going to let me go. He’ll probably wipe my memories*”. I had entirely forgotten that he could read my thoughts.

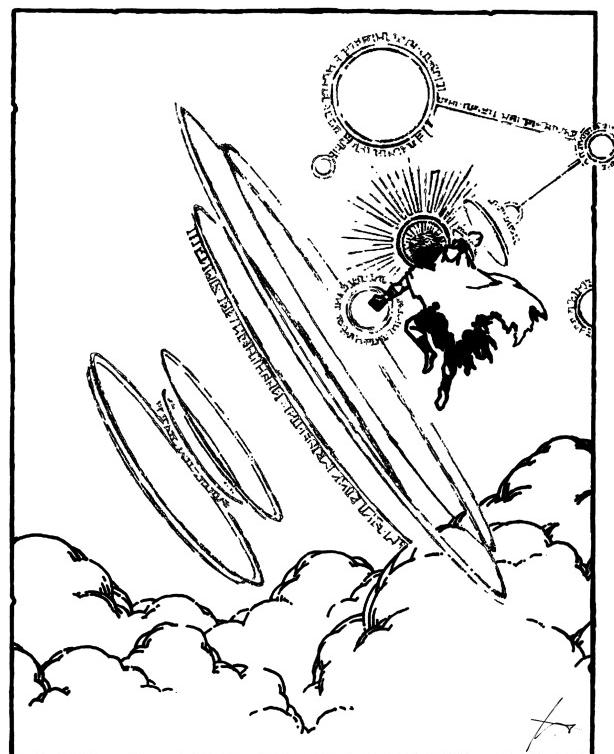
Everything I thought was as good as screamed out loud.

He smiled before answering, “*You have become friend. You have my word, I would not*”

Before I could answer, I appeared in the toilet of my office building, alone.

And as I walked out of the toilet door, his voice followed:

“*Besides no one will believe you, you’re a writer after all*”



Shorts.

and still, I feel...

*and still, I feel
the very feelings I try so hard to kill.
Their persistence indicating how real,
how surreal.
This was not the plan, this was not the deal,
still. I feel.*

Continue.

I fear that this is not the end, that this would only take its place as one of the many falls bound to happen as we persistently attempt to make something out of this more-than friendship. I fear that I might again be charmed into returning to the never ending questions; questions about your loyalty, intentions and our rankings in each other's hearts.

*I fear that I would return to that *deja vu*, that I would be forced to relive an experience terrifyingly similar to a bad memory from years past. I fear that I would be given what resembles attention and intimacy only to also be given a reason to walk away from it.*

*I fear that I would be predictable and return just like you might have anticipated.
I fear that I would take another shot, only to miss, to lose again.
I fear that this was only but a pause.*

That just like the times before...

...we would continue.

Sin

I saw sin yesterday, then I broke it.
It tried to take over, had to fold it.
Started crying for help, then I told it:
“You couldn’t have my soul, even though you hold it.
Because you’re too late, I already sold it.”

G



Shorts.

The last dialogue.

“Come on, you don’t do that. You don’t just leave”

“*You can go back in and continue talking about me with your friend*”

“And what makes you think we were talking about you?”

“*You were talking about me*”

“*I don’t like it when people talk about me*”

“What makes you thi-“

“*I’m not doing this right now man*”

“Wow, okay”

“...”

“What do you want from me?”

“*I don’t kn-*“

“Bullshit!”

“*I really don’t know...*”

“What do you want from me?!”

“*You’re raising your voice...*”

“Am I?! I’m not raising my voice!”

“*Okay, nothing... nothing!*”

“Nothing? What do you mean nothing?!”

“*Stop shouting, you’re scaring me*”

“I decide to leave and you blow up my phone for an entire week to get me to come back and I did and now you’re telling me you want nothing?!”

“*I’m sorry, I won’t do that again*”

“That’s not what I’m saying. I...”

“*I’m really not sure. You said you wanted an answer the next we met and...*”

“I didn’t say that. I said when next I asked and I haven’t yet because I don’t want to pressure you.”

“...”

“I really can’t understand you right now”

“*If it’s so tiring then just leave!*”

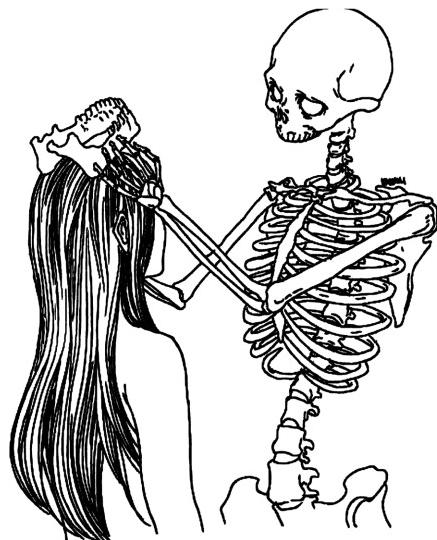
“That’s exactly what I’m going to do!”

“...”

“Don’t speak to me again.”

And when you miss her, remember...

- Sternritter M
- The ‘buts, ifs and maybes’
- The previous falls and the reasons why they happened
 - POV, page 6
- The last dialogue
- The unending rumors and controversies
 - Her crowd pleaser behavior
- “*I don’t want to waste your time any more than I already have*”
 - The wallpaper
 - The mixed signals
- The outcomes of our ‘*Honest Conversations*’
 - Her insatiable hunger for attention



“Because the next time you look back, see past the good times.”

Shorts.

Reach and Pierce

The world changed, guns came into play. The Asian katana's close combat techniques immediately became extremely ineffective against the European gun's lethal long ranged attacks. This challenging change led to the birth of the 'Reach and Pierce' technique among samurai in the Japans. However, unlike the ease of pulling the trigger of a pistol, the technique followed an extreme process and could only be obtained by a select few. This fact didn't change a thing as the small squad of samurai who had mastered this technique was more than sufficient to exterminate whichever army they were confronted by.

Obtaining the technique followed a three step process. The samurai with the guidance of a Zen Buddhist monk would need to partially summon Itaden, the Japanese god of speed. The samurai then draws his blade, exposing it to the direct aura of the summoned being—leaving a particular signature on the blade. The body of the samurai, although not being the primary target, is also slightly exposed to this otherworldly force. And the sword, soaked with Itadens aura, serves as a channel, a pathway, sending the technique to the sword bearer. This implies that the technique would be inaccessible to the samurai in the absence of his blade.

The technique consists of two abilities: Reach and Pierce.

Reach outrageously increases the kinetic energy of the user's body granting the user with dead eye vision, enhanced reflexes and immense speed in the form of teleportation. However, this ability is restricted to only distances which the user can see. This ability was intended to solve the problem of gun range and bullet speed, allowing the user to instantly close the gap and even the odds.

Its pair ability, Pierce, is an instant kill ability intended to match the lethal nature of a gunshot. When pierced with the sword, the opponent is doused with a raw form of Itadens aura and being human, the body is unable to comprehend such otherworldly power shutting down instantly.

In the next few years, the Japanese would possess guns of their own, rendering the technique obsolete as the guns were more convenient and accessible.

—

"Finally!" he let out a loud sigh of relief as he left the building. He had just finished work after the usual long, tiring nine hour shift; he was never used to it. He worked as a dishwasher in a five-star restaurant with the hopes of one day getting promoted to a chef. Today was different; not only was it the weekend, it was also payday. He smiled from ear to ear as he strolled to the bar a few blocks away.

Arriving and taking a seat at the bar, he didn't have to say a word before the bartender poured him a drink. Being a regular there, the bartender already knew his usual.

"*You know me too well*", he replied to the bartender's gesture with a smile and a manly nod.

As one would expect, it was a noisy setting, with rock music playing in the background and plenty of conversations happening all over the place at once. He sat quietly, sipping his drink while paying attention

to all that was happening at the bar; he loved the drama. Interesting as the environment was, he was bored. He too wanted to be part of the craziness, part of the drama.

As he observed the room, he noticed a table where a few men were gathered; they were gambling and placing bets while having their drinks. He found it to be the most interesting table in the room and anyone was welcome to join the table. The thought crossed his mind; he touched his pocket and felt his pay. The thought that he could double or even triple it wouldn't leave his mind. He used to be a chronic gambler and was so good he planned on going pro but his fiancée at the time disliked the idea and ultimately left him because of it. He had undergone therapy and had been clean for a year and half.

Ultimately losing the struggle, he stood up and walked in the table's direction.

"Space for one more?" He asked, pulling a chair.

"If yer got money to lose, I don't see why not!" One of the men answered with all the men bursting into laughter.

"That's settled then!" He answered laughing along with them. He knew the rules of gambling; you never take banter to heart.

They kicked off the game, four players including him, playing for the prize pool, winner takes all. He placed small bets and intentionally lost the first two rounds, learning and noticing their flaws with each loss he took. He had trained his mind to become extremely perceptive and razor sharp along with being calm under intense pressure and patience.

As he lost the first round, the men again, bursted into laughter.

"Not quite how you expected this to go, er mate?" One of them exclaimed, sending men into another fit of laughter.

"Come on, don't be mean. Pour the lad a drink" Another mockingly added.

He knew he had to place them in a position of convenience. He needed them to be relaxed and confident. It was a tactic that had never failed him. As they played, men constantly bantered both him and themselves, it was common practice in gambling to throw your opponent off balance.

"Damn, what have I done? You're all professionals!" He said in the most believable manner as he lost the second round.

"Well, there's no backing down now, kid," One of the men who was only a spectator answered him. All the other men had extremely proud and confident looks on their faces—they were exactly where he wanted them.

As they collected bets for the next round, he shocked the entire table when he placed half of everything he had on him. The men wore very greedy smiles while also being in a state of confusion. The spectators shook their heads in pity for him.

"Uh oh, mate's gotten desperate!" A spectator whispered.

Raising his bet influenced the other players to do the same, walking right into his trap.

The third round started. There was an intensity in the air, the spectators grew, the attention of the entire bar was drawn to that corner. As they placed their cards on the table, wet from spilled beer, it started to become clear who the winner of the round was going to be.

With a calm demeanor he declared, *"Well, gentlemen... we have a winner."* Sending the spectators into a frenzy. Some called it dumb luck, others, the perfect comeback; with the men having a look of both disappointment and admiration.

"Good round, lad. But there's still more rounds ahead of us," one of the men reminded. They went at it for several more rounds with the outcome unchanging. The number of players reduced with each win, they had hit their limits, lost enough for one night. His initial goal was to triple his pay and then quit but his pride and the crowd wouldn't let him, he had become an underdog; and had gone on to earn almost eight times his pay.

All the players had given up except one. His ego wouldn't let him, he used to be the champion of the bar. The mano-a-mano continued until he had gone flat but that wasn't still enough to deter him.

"One more, kid. You win, I owe you." The former champion declared, still fired up.

"You know the rules, man. You don't gamble on credit," he answered, having a look of pity for the man.

"Come on, lad. Give the man a shot," A spectator replied.

Being the crowd pleaser that he was, he indulged the man, going for one more round and ultimately winning leaving the man in his debt.

"Fair. I'd tell you what, come by at the stor'an get yer a piece worth that price eh?" the man bargained. The man, the former champion, owned a pawn shop in the city that traded items of value. It made for the perfect means to repay his debt.

This last win didn't matter much to the newly crowned underdog, it was more of title and reputation than prize, so he accepted.

—

As he went about his usual Saturday routine of lounging around and staying in the entire day, he remembered the appointment he made the day before: he had to head to the pawn shop and pick up his prize item from the game yesterday. It seemed like a hassle to him as he had already mentally prepared to do nothing. The thought of letting it go had even crossed his mind.

"Nothing like extra cash," he thought, reluctantly putting clothes on his body.

On arrival at the pawn shop, the pawnbroker had already displayed the items that were within the value range of his winnings the night before. Among the items were a vase, a stone figure, a life-size porcelain figurine and a katana. He planned to pick something alluring, something that could easily be sold—that was the whole point, to resell. He needed the money, not some fancy trophy. The vase and stone sculpture were unappealing, at least to him. The porcelain figurine caught his eye; he loved it and was a second away from finalizing his choice when he considered some factors: it was a life size figure. This meant he alone could not take it back to his apartment, not without the help of a moving service which he was unwilling to pay for. Secondly, it was extremely fragile, and cautiousness was not exactly his strong suit. Lastly, he lived in a tiny apartment, he barely even fit in it himself. There was no space to store the figurine while it waited to be sold.

His eyes moved from the figurine to the katana. It looked no different from the usual katana. If anything, it looked very authentic, it looked more Japanese than the others he saw hanging on the wall behind the pawnbroker, it looked ancient.

"You're sure this is worth the same as these other guys?" He queried, raising an eyebrow.

"Yep" the pawnbroker replied, distracted by the football game that showed on the television that hung.

"Oh really? looks the same to me..." He followed.

Now paying attention to him, the pawnbroker answered, “*Yeah, maybe they do. Y’know, they say this sword kills whatever with a single cut*”

“*Who’s they?*” He sharply replied.

“*I don’t know, man. I don’t make the legends*” the man answered with light laughter, returning his attention to the football game.

“*That’s definitely some bullshit,*” he thought, unsheathing the sword.

To his surprise, the sword’s blade was nowhere near the condition that it’s hilt had suggested. It was perfectly clean and shiny as though it had just been cleaned or better yet, like it had just been forged. He went from feeling let down to feeling fascinated. But there was something odd; while the sword was exposed, he felt a wave of tiredness hit him. A wave of tiredness that disappeared the moment he sheathed the sword again. He dismissed the feeling with the thought of being hungry.

“*I’ll take it*” he called out, again distracting the broker from the football game.

“*Okay! That settles it then. Oh and remind me never to play against you again*” the man joked as he wrapped the sword in a thick brown cloth.

As they signed the ownership transfer papers, they exchanged gentlemanly smiles though the pawnbroker’s seemed a bit forced.

“*A bet is a bet*” the pawnbroker said, extending his hand for a handshake.

“*A bet is a bet*” he answered, gripping his hand, receiving the handshake.

As left the shop with the sword hung at his back, he turned around to give the porcelain figurine one last look.

“*This better be good.*” He whispered before exiting the door.

—

A week passed and he had become careless with his winnings from the previous weekend—he could feel bankruptcy setting in. Gambling was out of the question; the word had spread and no one would dare play him and he was still weeks away from his next payday. It was at this point that he remembered—the katana.

He bolted home that evening with the determination to have it sold by the end of the next day. Having very little knowledge of swords, he decided to start with a thorough research on katanas, exploring various aspects from their history, to valuation, to areas where they are most valued. And as he carried out his investigation, he remembered the pawnbroker mentioning that the sword could kill anything with a single cut, prompting him to narrow his research to that area. This led him to a thread on Reddit that provided detailed explanations, the legend of these ‘special swords’ as well as the concept of the Reach and Pierce technique. Although it was explained in detail and in the most believable manner, he still wasn’t buying it. He considered Reddit to be a platform for nerds and conspiracy theorists.

He stayed up until 2am, taking photos and listing on every platform he knew of. However, his search and desperation was to no avail causing him to fall asleep face down on his computer’s keyboard.

However, he didn’t simply doze off. He had been careless and left the sword unsheathed on the table and as a consequence, had been overcome by the extreme tiredness induced by exposure to its spiritual aura. The sword’s blade hadn’t stayed so exposed in years allowing the aura to remain concentrated.

Shorts.

He woke up and was thrown into a state of shock upon the realization that he had been asleep for a solid thirty-eight hours. He somehow calmed himself down, concluding that he had been so drunk that he forgot everything that had happened the past day. He felt surprisingly energetic, surprisingly aware. Observing his room, he was dissatisfied with the state he found it to be; it was disorganized in every way. With extraordinary efficiency, he organized his tiny apartment, putting each item where they should be, how it should be.

Lastly, he picked up the sword from his desk, admiring it for almost a minute but as he did, he noticed that despite being in direct contact with the sword while its blade was exposed, he wasn't feeling any tiredness unlike the times before.

"See? I knew it. You were trippin'..." he inaudibly said to himself.

Sliding the sword back into its scabbard with his eyes fixed at the far end of the room where he intended to place it, he continued, *"...now let's put you whe-*"

Before he could complete his sentence, he had somehow gotten to the part of the room where he planned to place the sword and he knew one thing for certain: he hadn't walked there.

"Okay this time I'm not trippin'. I know what I saw. What the f-"

 he audibly reacted, immediately releasing the sword from his grip. He was unable to comprehend what had just happened.

Still in a shared state of shock, fear and surprise, he sat on his bed staring at the sword for almost ten minutes, trying his best to provide an explanation for what had just happened.

Unknowingly to him, his body had spent the past day soaking up the aura emitted by the exposed blade, granting him an ability that had been incompatible and inaccessible to many. This would be the first time in a very long time that he had experienced luck outside a gambling table.

Unable to come up with an explanation, he thought to experiment—just what you would expect from a risk taker. He walked to the other end of the room several times with slow steps, expecting something to happen but nothing did. He was not about to be convinced that he was crazy. Frustrated, he hurried back to his former position to give one last try, this time, holding the sword.

He hadn't even moved, only thinking about being there caused him to instantly appear there.

"Well, shit. So it's you..." he spoke to the sword.

His mind had travelled from a state of confusion, to curiosity and now, to excitement. Normally, it would be difficult for the human mind to comprehend and accept such an extraordinary phenomenon but he had been elevated past the 'normal human'.

Skipping work that day, he spent all morning experimenting and 'reaching' around his apartment, taking the time to revisit the very same Reddit thread that he had written off the day before; washing dishes paled in comparison to this discovery. He felt like a child with a new toy.

Reach was the easy part; all he had to do was see the destination and think of being there, but Pierce was the tricky part. He didn't know the first thing about swinging a sword. This fact didn't bother him in the slightest; he was anything but a killer—never killed anyone and had no intention to.

"Nothing YouTube can't teach," he thought.

It didn't take long before he started to make the most of his newfound ability. By the end of the week, his apartment was filled up with all sorts of supplies: canned food, drink crates, snack cartons, among many other essentials.

Most people would look to be heroes if they got superpowers—but that's because they don't.

Shorts.

In reality, that doesn't happen, especially when you're grown, broke, underemployed and definitely not paid for your heroics. And this is not to mention the pride and the freedom to do whatever, knowing no one could stop you. His villain arc had already happened years ago; all that was left was the means, which he now possessed.

It had been a while since he consistently ate this well—which is ironic, considering he works at a restaurant. He was comfortable but this was only a fraction of what he aimed for. He had lofty ambitions: he would become a serial bank robber, a villain.

He quit work entirely, spending most of his time training at an abandoned farm at the outskirts of the city. It was a really long distance from where he lived but getting there was no problem. Being an intellectual, he had come up with the most innovative ideas on how to use Reach. His favorite was long distance Reach; he'd teleport high above everything else, into free fall, giving him an aerial view of the city, extending the reach of his ability.

He was learning to properly use a sword via YouTube videos; if anything, he had learned the basics and gone past being a novice, never letting the sword out of his sight. He decided to dedicate a month of training before his debut.

Three weeks had passed when, on that Thursday morning, he was interrupted by a knock on his door. With sluggish steps, he made his way to the entrance, peering through the peephole to see who it was. At the other side of his door were five men, dressed in black suits with dark shades, like characters straight out of a Men in Black movie.

He immediately ran to his bed and returned with his sword; hiding the weapon behind his back and answering the door with a friendly smile.

"Morning, gentlemen. I'm not owing any taxes if that's why you're here" he started, with light laughter. None of the men cracked a smile at his supposed joke.

"PAC, Paranormal Activities Commission. We would like to speak to you about a sword in your possession." One of the men started, with an extremely serious look, revealing a badge.

"Fuck me. Government" he murmured.

Unknowing to him, he had led them to his front door. He had forgotten to delist the sword from all the platforms he had put it up for sale on. They had been conducting surveillance on him for the past two weeks and he hadn't a single clue.

"I knew you lot were going to show up, sooner or later" he swung the door fully open, revealing the sword from behind his back with a devilish grin.

"Hand over the weapon, sir. We would use force if necessary!" Their leader called out in a commanding tone.

He was not in the slightest bit intimidated, he was swollen with confidence. He disappeared, returning with a tray of coffee cups.

"Where are my manners? Coffee?" He mockingly asked.

They immediately reached for and pointed their guns at him, causing him to burst into laughter.

"Do you even know why this sword was created?" He queried as he laughed.

Fed up with his antics, they released a barrage of gunshots at him.

They froze with fear as he appeared among them with his sword positioned at their leader's neck.

"One cut, just one. I'm sure you know what I mean" he whispered, menacingly.

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"Is that coffee still hot though?" the leader asked with forced courage, trying to hide his fear.

"See? That's what I'm talking about. Dialogue." Teleporting back to his former position.

"Come in, have a seat and don't be shy to grab a cup," he continued, welcoming them inside.

The men reluctantly obliged and came inside. It was clear that force would not work, not without casualties. The leader sat while the rest stood, still on guard.

"You're pretty good for someone with barely any training. We could use you at P.A.C.K" the man started.

"P.A.C.K? Like with a K?"

"The Paranormal Activities Commission's Kill squad. A special strike force team made up of special people... like you."

"So like the Avengers?"

"Similar, but government funded. The pay is quite handsome"

"Yeah, that sounds kinda tempting... but the last person I want to work for is Uncle Sam..."

"Sir, I'm afraid that if you don't take this offer, the next people that'd come visiting would be people like you... and trust me, they're not the type to stop for chat and coffee."

"Damn, I won't want that either... leaves me in an odd spot"

He stood up and started pacing around the room as the agents quietly watched, following his every move. After about eight minutes, he sank back into the sofa and let out a loud sigh. At that moment an idea struck him; and his frustrated expression immediately transformed into a wide smile.

"Well, shit, I just remembered! The sword's still up for bloody sale!" He announced loudly.

"How much?" The agent asked with a look of satisfaction. He never imagined that his target would be so willing to let go of the sword, even for money.

His face wore an even more mischievous grin. He was about to bill the government and he wasn't going to be lenient.

"Forty-Two Million" he answered, watching the agent's expression.

To his surprise, the agent, unfazed, sharply replied, *"Done."*

"I'll take your details. You should receive it shortly" the man continued, extending his arm for a handshake.

As they waited for the receipt confirmation for the transaction, he slipped away from the apartment to a construction site not far from the building where he lived. Standing alone there on the premises, he wondered whether he had made the right decision. He reminisced on everything he had experienced these past weeks, it hurt him to let go of this newly acquired power but his options were limited.

He unsheathed and admired the sword before smiling and muttering to himself, *"Talk about return on investment"*

Noticing a hammer on the ground, he picked it up and chipped away a small piece of the sword's blade.

"A souvenir, if anything" he added.

He noticed the sword repair itself; he was not surprised, it only made sense why the sword stayed so unscathed despite existing for so long.

Upon receiving a confirmation message for the transaction, he hurried back to his apartment. He had been so quick that they hadn't noticed he'd left. The room was filled with satisfied looks upon the successful

Shorts.

completion of the transaction. The deal was a win-win, the best possible outcome for both parties. They exchanged another handshake before the men left the apartment building.

As they drove off, he hurriedly packed his belongings in excitement; with that much money in his account, he had no business living in such a shitty apartment. Feeling the blade piece in his pocket, he thought to put it underneath the watch he wore, so it had contact with his skin: he considered it a lucky charm.

His leg moved to take a step, and in an instant, he found himself at the other end of the hallway. “*Fuck yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Fucking Yes!*” he screamed with all the excitement he could muster. The piece of the blade allowed him to retain access to the Reach technique alone as long as it was in direct contact with his skin.

Still bursting with excitement, he headed outside with his luggage and hailed a cab for the airport.

On arrival at the airport, he stood before the attendant when she asked, “*Where to, sir?*” “*Vegas... Las Vegas,*” he answered with a grin.”



If we went on a date

I'd wear a brown sweater vest, you know I like those.
Maybe I'll order spaghetti like I did on all my dates before.
I might outdress you, I know I will.
Though it wouldn't matter as I'd like to undress you afterwards.
Wonder which would shine brighter; your forehead or my Doc martens.
I'd leave with and leave you with a souvenir,
A physical remembrance of the moment, to have proof that the event I experienced was in fact not a daydream.
You won't get even a sip of alcohol. I'd expect you to get high off the moment.
I'd take you to a jazz club. It's important to me that you see the light
A possible ecstasy, spiritual.

But what are the odds?
That this is the timeline, the universe where you refuse?
That on that day we discover incompatibility?
That you are allergic to the flowers that I would bring you?
That we show up in masks? Leaving without the slightest knowledge of each other's existence.

Answers and a euphoria we can only know if...

I'd share AirPods with you

when we've arrived at that meeting that yet physical, is nothing of that nature.
Where we speak but not with our own words
as every thing we wish to say would be spoken in music and sound
And that which isn't would be communicated with our eyes.
Two spirits, temporarily existing together in another plane entirely different from earth,
existing naked.
This supernatural marriage, a nonexistence of time and space,
to defy everything that we know to be normal;
Is the very reason why

I'd share AirPods with you.

Stars for breakfast

I had stars for breakfast.
The contextualization is left for you.
I just might be:
a villainous cosmic entity, a black hole
who consumed the very energy that makes for the existence of a star.
A carnivorous beast,
who attacked and tore to pieces, a rockstar and a movie star,
providing sustenance for itself and the pride.
A child, minutes late for school,
who just had his favorite cereal, Starz this morning before running off to school
A lover, whose morning visited him with the most unexpected text:
“This isn’t working for me anymore. I’m leaving you.”
a late night break up text from his long time love, a woman named Starr
A slave, having the wrongest master,
woken up with a knuckle sandwich, so hard that he saw what appeared as stars.
The homeless man, so penniless,
that dawn stargazing fills his belly.

Ah, yes. What better satisfaction than the sustenance of the sky.

Shorts.

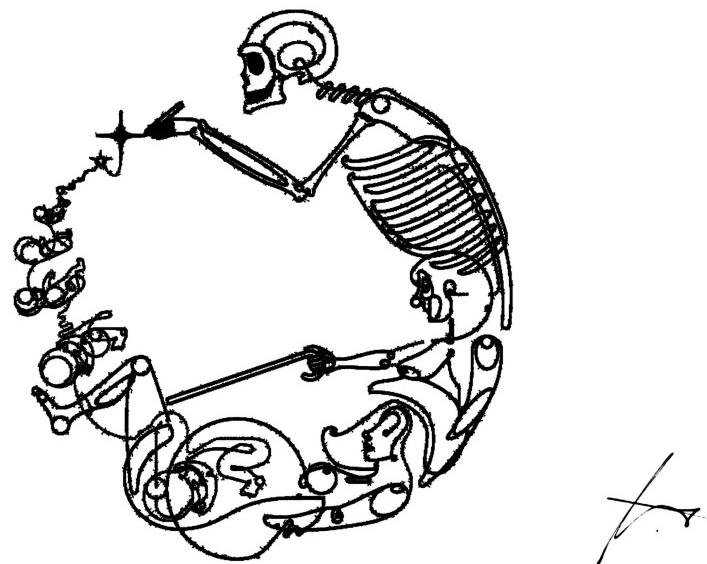
Circle back

Reincarnation, I believe in reincarnation.

In the reincarnation of dead people? Hardly. But in the re-existence of old relationships, patterns, people in the new. I mean, I would know; it's an experience that's always new though I've seen it times before. What's even crazier is the similarities of the patterns between the former and the new; everything happens to be playing out just like it did before but because you already know of this pattern, you alter it in the ways that you can. Had you not experienced it before, it would've played out the exact same way. It's almost as though you have been given a second chance.

I feel surrounded by reincarnates. It makes you want to wonder when and wherever you'd meet a new batch. And while it could be extremely unsettling, it could be equally relieving as you have a chance to do and not do the things that you could not do in the previous. Unknown to the new, they are burdened with the task of building a reputation for themselves while preserving or correcting the reputation of the previous.

Or maybe this is bullshit, maybe it's all in my head, maybe every existence is entirely unique— maybe similar, but unique. Regardless, I consider it a thought that is not entirely untrue, a thought that I find somewhat comforting.



Shorts.

The scroll, The feather

*Because when I write, I am in control.
I sit there, with my keyboard, all powerful— a god.
To create and to alter an entire reality as I see fit; to hold power comparable to cosmic,
To control the intensity of a real world narrative.*

*Because when I write, I am absent.
Held in a state where I know nothing of reality,
In a place where both time and space are nonexistent,
Ignorant to the fact that I am tired, ignorant to the fact that I am lonely.*

*Because when I write, I feel.
My emotions, unfiltered, as they are the fuel, the very soul of my work.
I stand bare, vulnerable, naked,
My body ceases to be made of physical matter, I am entirely made of emotion— intangible, spiritual.*

Didn't quite catch your name...

Swizzy, 2014: Derived from the fact that the name, ‘Suami’ was mostly misspelled as ‘Swami’. Now, while this brought about the idea of this alias, ‘Swizzy’ was largely influenced by the ‘Swag’ era of music at the time where most artistes and celebrities went by aliases ending with ‘-izzy’; Lil Wayne’s Weezy, Chris Brown’s Brezzy, Drake’s Drizzy, and the likes. This particular alias is found to be the most popular as a result of the many tags left at different locations at the junior high school. It would go on to produce several other alias variations.

Tsunami, ‘14-‘15: This alias was first used by his first year math instructor in a lousy attempt to get a laugh out of the class. Initially intended to be a taunt, this alias eventually came to be both likable and catchy. Though was never used by Suami.

SZY, ‘16- ‘18: After the ‘Swag’ era faded, being called ‘Swizzy’ was considered old fashioned and out of style. This led to a reconstruction of a unique variant that consisted of only the first, fourth and sixth letters— SZY.

The three letters are pronounced separately: S, Z and Y, as pronouncing them at once made no sense. This alias went on to be the most liked and most used.

Pharaoh, ‘18: This alias was born from his obsession with ancient Egyptian history and mythology at the time. It is considered to be his most unoriginal alias with a classmate even bearing the exact same alias. The alias didn’t last for long, fading along with his Egyptian obsession.

Grizzly, ‘18: One of the aliases from an experimental phase where different aliases were adopted because they sounded cool only to be dropped after a short time.

Blacheart, ‘18: Also a product of the experimental phase, this alias was generated from the tiny black colored hearts he left at the bottom of his drawings and on random surfaces. It was eventually converted to a pair alias— ‘SZY Blacheart’.

Shorts.

Eszeewai, '19: Now having a stronger social media presence, the need for the perfect username arose. While 'SZY' was perfect, unique and simple, it had a downside: it contained only four characters which was short of the five character minimum at the time. As a result, 'SZY' was stretched out into its pronunciation, 'Es-Ze-Wai'.

Es, '19: 'Eszeewai', just like 'Swizzy' was after a while, perceived to be too long and was shortened into its first two letters, 'Es'. It was mainly used on tags, signatures and drawing watermarks, with its complete form still in use in the social media space. It was also sometimes paired with 'Blacheart' as 'Es Blacheart' and was sometimes mispronounced by people as 'Ace'.

Kxng Frozht, '19: From the most unpleasant of experiences, this alias was created. His skin had an intense reaction with the water at the new state he had just moved to, causing it to turn plain white, covered in rashes and itchy. The whiteness of his skin, as if frozen, at the time led to him adopting the alias. The alias eventually disappeared, along with the skin reaction.

King, '20-'21: With the "Frozht" gone, all that was left was 'King'. This alias had a nice ring to it. It quickly turned his favorite, liking it to the point of introducing himself to new people as this alias and even going as far as fusing it with his personality. He eventually let go of the name along with the personality, reverting to 'SZY'



Shorts.

“...But you wrote a whole book for me”

“That was a moment of weakness”
“Fuck you, bitch.”



Letter to Montell

Dear Mr. Fish,

I'm divided, unsure whether or not to dislike you for making me remember, making me feel the things that I do, and over exaggerating the things that I feel. I hate that I see too much of myself in you, too much of you in me. Maybe I'd be getting better sleep if I was a lot more like Brent or Giveon. It's almost as though we have lived the same and loved the same. I would be wrong to consider your work, music. It is a mirror, a detailed account of my personal experiences, a proper explanation of my feelings and more importantly, it is prophecy.

I've met my Jamie. She's just as unkind and as careless with my heart as yours. When you spoke of her arrival, I took it lightly. I didn't think that I, with all my defenses, always on my guard, could possibly encounter her. She too admires your work, sometimes even using them to aid her schemes. Your work that once brought me peace and calm, now only haunts and disturbs my heart.

Your work details how I'd meet her and how she'd make me feel, the climax, the signs of the decline and the decline, the low lows, her patterns. But one thing, the most important thing, was left out. Your work does not include directions on what to do after the decline, instructions on how to let her go.

Initially, I found this to be unfair but then I wondered: Could it be that even you never figured it out? Could it be that you are still unable to let go of Jamie?

A fellow Romantic,
S.



Shorts.

Bathroom Blog

Before the existence of unlimited access to modern social media platforms, there was the bathroom blog—the Chat Wall. The likes of The Shade Room, Twitter or Kubool anonymous pale in comparison. This wall did something that every other wall of cement and stone can't—It spoke. It told secrets, it held information, it shared gossip and as you would expect, this wall was located in the girls room. It is a mystery how this wall came to be or who its founder was. But it would go on to serve as more than just a source of information or a means to air opinions, it would go on to serve as a judge, as a supreme authority.

When you stand before this wall, you are likely to first notice the bold inscription high up the wall that reads: "**CHAT WALL**". It is still a wonder how someone managed to reach high enough to inscribe that. This inscription is followed by many indications of presence by its many visitors and contributors:

"SoSo was here", "Lantana wz hia", "Nella came, Nella saw"

with each presence tag having a unique alias and design. It was common knowledge not to use real names on the wall, not when you weren't the subject of discussion. Mixed in with the presence tags was the main attraction, the sea of knowledge, a very troubled sea. It would be wrong and even impossible to place this knowledge in a single category. It was a cluster of everything all in one place. It was rumors, secrets, thoughts and feelings, questions, opinions, wild fantasies, conversations and debate. Something for every mood, something for every kind of visitor.

A literal slaughterhouse. Unfortunate was whoever's name appeared as a topic of discussion.

"lol, no she didn't"

*"Isn't that senior West's
girlfriend??"*

*"Disgusting liar and
boyfriend snatcher!"*

"Pagate fucked David"

"Damn, I wish it were me"

*"I always knew she was a
dirty slut "*

"Wait, fr? Crazyyyy"

Instant judgment from forces waiting to tear you apart, without a hearing or trial. We never questioned the authenticity of the wall. Only through the wall could you prove the wall incorrect. An all powerful decentralized authority, no one controlled the wall, no one could. There was no one outside of the reach of the wall's power, not even the teachers. A truly remarkable and frighteningly fair system.

This was a system clearly reserved for the females... up until a period where both male and female students shared a convenience block due to the absence of power at the boy's. Though this arrangement didn't last long, it was more than enough time for the boys to discover this secret government and as you would expect, join in on the action. They visited at night to read new updates, add updates and leave presence tags. A blog of unending content in the most unimaginable place—a literal bathroom blog.

Shorts.

Queen, Quinn

Sane? Anything but that.

But that don't matter
'cause I love ha
and I can't stress that enough an'
She's making it tougher, to recover, to reach out.

She shows up and I let my peace out,
Out the door,
Of this house...
called my peace of mind.

It's true, she makes me feel like this sometimes,
Unruly, she doesn't regard this cease and desist of mine,
Reminding that I was the one who approached her, poached her...
She was a shark in a sea of fishes,
A maxed out upgrade of the females you call bad bitches,

A Queen, Quinn, like the one Joker's got, Harley,
Hardly, you'd meet her somewhere that's not partly a party.
But her beauty, her skin, don't excuse her of her scheme,
She's a queen, Quinn.
She's crazy, it's a gray area, it's hazy, she hate me,
But somehow manages to amaze me.

Shorts.

Freefall

His mind was set, he was going to do it. He was going to end his life, and intended to go out with a bang.

The view from the 102nd floor of the Empire State Building was beautiful. The perfect last thing to see.

He jumped.

Eyes closed.

Falling almost as fast as the speed of sound, free fall.

1,380 feet,

1,164 feet,

970 feet,

The crowd of onlookers braced themselves for a diabolical scene.

550 feet,

200 feet,

86 feet,

41.6 feet,

12 feet,

He felt a hand grab him, he felt pulled by powerful force, at an incalculable speed.

He opened his eyes, expecting the afterlife,

But the sky was blue and birds flew, cars drove, nothing new. Surely this was not the afterlife.

He had been carefully set down not too far from the building.

Speedster? Angel?

He knew something inhuman had saved him; He had no idea who, what it was.

Purpose, he's found purpose. To live to seek out and worship whatever it is he believed had saved him.

Shorts.

With love, Issa.

To ask me if I miss her
Would be like asking the stars if they miss the sky,
Asking the sun if it misses its warmth,
Or asking the ocean if it missed the rivers that gave it life.
I've seen the most beautiful flowers but they all smell the same,
I got to see the most beautiful places in the world but the wind winded same everywhere...

Only in your presence the wind whispered a fragrance to the flower,
A scent untold in other places.
I would recognize you in total darkness were you mute and I, deaf,
I would recognize you in another lifetime, entirely in different bodies, different timelines...
And I would love you in all of this
Until the very last star in the sky burnt out into oblivion.

They asked, "do you love her to death?"
I said, "speak of her over my grave and watch how she brings me back to life"

I

Untitled

He saw her as he hurriedly walked to work, the most beautiful existence his eyes had ever beheld.

Love at first sight, like in the Hollywood movies.

Everything happened in an instant, there was not a single second of room for conversation.

He walked past, not uttering a single word to her.

He thought about her for months, he walked the same route for months, hoping to run into her.

And after eight months, he did. She happened to be at a seminar that he too attended.

He did not speak to her.

But he loved her.

Weeks later, he saw her, sitting alone at the cafe opposite the office building,

Must've been a divine arrangement.

She looked even more beautiful each time he saw her.

He walked in, ordered a cup of coffee to go...

...and left.

He did not speak to her.

But he loved her.

That weekend, he was at the mall shopping for supplies and essentials.

Coincidentally, they happened to be on the exact same shopping aisle,

Everything leaned in his favor, this was definitely the moment.

She walked in his direction and he in hers...

...and when she was right in front of him, he walked past her.

He did not speak to her.

Shorts.

But he loved her.

He never saw her again.

He knew nothing about her, not even her name.

Maybe the next time he saw her he would speak to her...

Maybe not.



"For I fear that, maybe like Icarus, if I get too close to my sun, I will be burned; my wings destroyed, my body thrown to the ground"

Osho's Wisdom

In fact, a mature person does not fall in love, he rises in love. The word 'fall' is not right. Only immature people fall; they stumble and fall down in love.

Somehow they were managing and standing. They cannot manage and they cannot stand—they find a woman and they are gone, they find a man and they are gone. They were always ready to fall on the ground and to creep. They don't have the backbone, the spine; they don't have that integrity to stand alone.

Attachment is a kind of gravitation, unattachment is grace. Unreal love is another name for attachment; real love is very detached.

Unreal love shows so much concern it is always concerned. Real love is considerate but has no concern. If you really love a man you will be considerate of his true need but you will not show unnecessary concern for his foolish, stupid fantasies.

You will take every care of his needs, but you are not there to fulfill his fictitious desires. You will not fulfill anything that is really going to harm him. For example, you will not fulfill his ego, although his ego will be demanding. The person who is too concerned, attached, will fulfill the ego demands—that means you are poisoning your beloved. Consideration means you will see that this is not a real need but an ego need; you will not fulfill it.

If I have to choose between the words love and God, I will choose love; I will forget all about God, because those who know love are bound to know God. But it is not vice versa: Those who think about God and philosophize about God may never know about love—and will never know about God, either.

Search into, meditate on love, experiment. Love is the greatest experiment in life, and those who live without experimenting with love energy will never know what life is. They will only remain on the surface without going into the depth of it.

Who knows about what is going to happen tomorrow? The woman you love or the man you love either movement is possible: You may come closer, you may become distant. You may become again, strangers or you may become so one with each other that even to say that you are two will not be right.

Once you put two persons together, a male and a female, soon the third will arrive.

People don't love the woman that is there. They love the appreciation that the woman is giving to them, the attention that the woman is giving to them, the flattery that the woman is showering on the man. The woman flatters the man, the man flatters the woman; it is mutual flattery.

Retrospect

2023, 2024, 2025.
All just numbers to me
But they scream in my ear,
With a voice so unbearably shrill,
That I'm getting older.

I remember when I just turned 11,
It would seem to that guy,
The world couldn't get any harder.
He could have bragged rather ignorantly,
That he had the toughest life there was.

But he was stupid;
He didn't have fears, anxieties, and panic attacks.
Not until he turned 18.

What I would give,
To go back and warn him...
...of what's ahead.

Gem's Gem

Give me reasons as to why I shouldn't fall in love with you,
And I'll give you reasons to why we need oxygen to fill our lungs.

I'll explain why the earth spins,
But our buildings stay still.

Only my head spins—
when you orbit around me.

And so, my darling, this is what I've come to know,
That the rivers must flow,
the bird must sing its tune,
And my heart must beat for you.

B



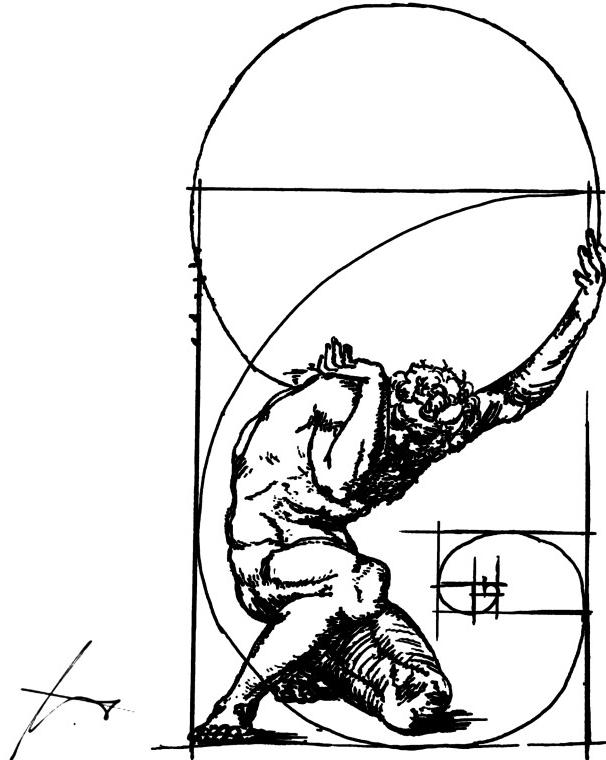
Shorts.

How bold of you to assume that this is the end.

*Oh darling, this is only the first of many....
as there can be no rebirth without death.*

- **Dawn Rain, written by Fatima.**
- **Dawn Rain (Alternate), written by her AI buddy, Darcy.**
 - **Twin flames, written by Lang Lauv.**
 - **Sin, written by Greenwood Orianwo.**
- **With love, Issa, written by Toluwanimi “Issa” Oderinde.**
- **Osho’s Wisdom, written by Chandra “Osho” Jain (via ‘Love, Freedom and Aloneness’)**
 - **Retrospect, written by Rotimi “The Genius”**
 - **Gem’s Gem, written by Boye Gem Ikio.**
- **All illustrations by Toluwanimi “Issa” Oderinde.**

If any part of this book is extracted, the respective creator/ author should be credited.



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Shorts.

Shorts.

Most of which were written by S.